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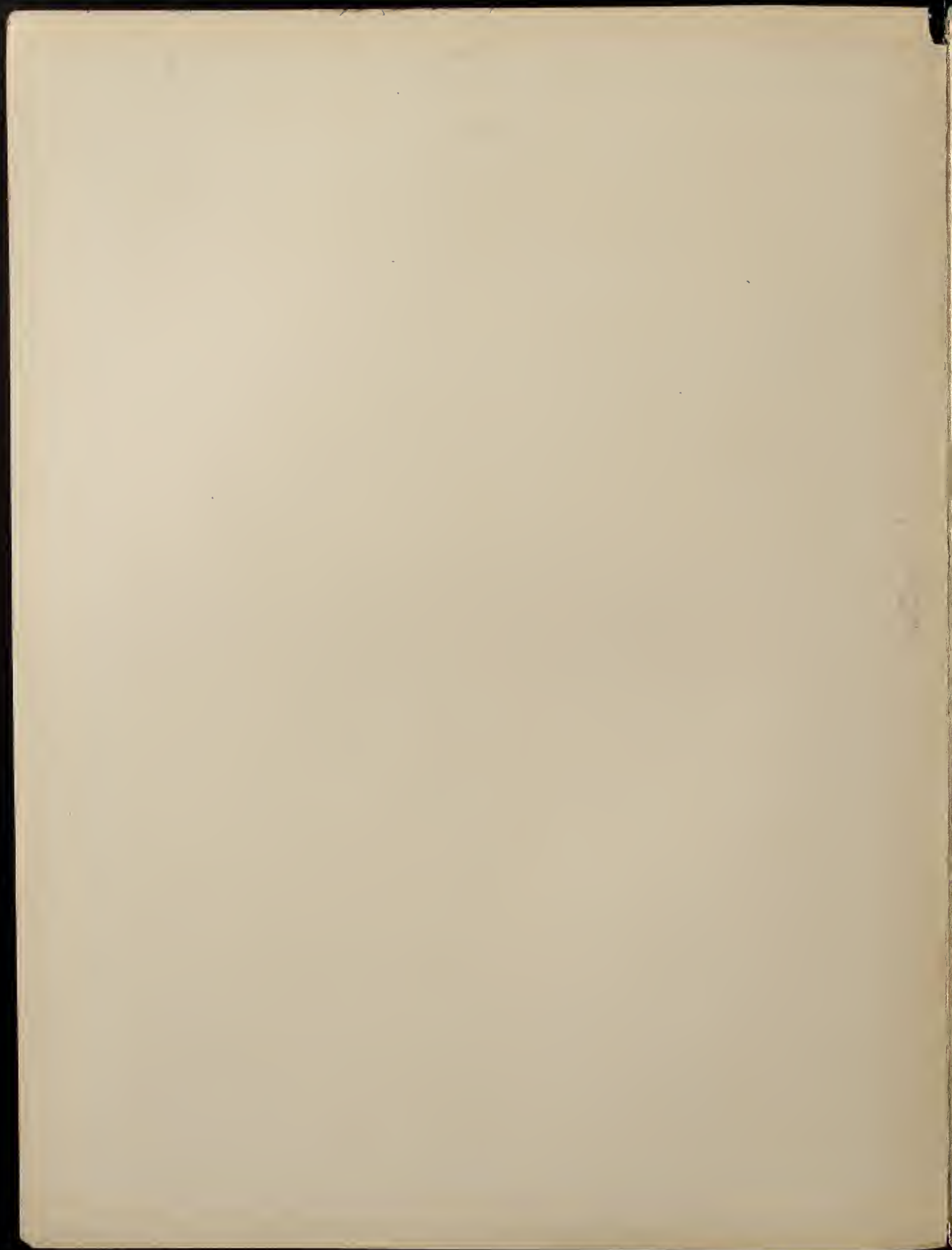
Six Variations, G Major

— BEETHOVEN —

GRADE II—B

No. 45







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PIANO

Grade II-B

## SIX VARIATIONS, G MAJOR.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (bāt-hō-fēn).

Born at Bonn, Germany, December 16, 1770.

Died at Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827.

Hamilton Conservatory of Music

**B**y common consent of the musical world, the composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, was either absolutely the greatest, or at least one of two or three greatest, of all the composers who have ever lived. This eminence is given him, in part, for the finish of his style; but more by reason of the nobility, strength and beauty of his melodies and harmonies. Music may be "technic," skill in composition; or it may be a revelation of human moods of unusual range and nobility; or it may be both these. Beethoven's music has both these merits, and in range and nobility of moods, as well as in exquisite melody and significant harmony, his music stands with the world at large higher and more enjoyable than the music of any other composer whatever.

Beethoven came of a Dutch family of musicians, who were singers in the choir of the cathedral at Antwerp. But early in the 18th century Ludwig van Beethoven, grandfather of the composer, had removed to Bonn, on the Rhine, where for many years he held various important positions in the musical establishment of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne, whose principal palace was at Bonn. The older Beethoven was at first the solo bass singer in the choir and in the opera; later stage-manager, and still later musical conductor. Even when past sixty years of age he is reported to have left the conductorship to a substitute in order to himself take the principal bass role on the stage, no singer capable of the part being at hand.

The son of Grandfather Beethoven was named Johann, an extremely gifted musician and a tenor singer in the choir and opera. But by middle life he had become terribly dissipated and his family lived in abject poverty while the husband and father wasted his small salary in the ale-house.

Under these circumstances the composer, Beethoven, the oldest child of Johann, soon became the mainstay of the family. Showing marked talent for music at a very early age, he was taught at first occasionally by his father; and later by different musicians of the establishment, who had become interested in him. Soon after he was 11 he was playing viola in the orchestra; when he was just past 12, he was assistant organist; and six months later he was assistant-conductor of the orchestra, in which capacity it was his duty to conduct the sub-rehearsals, adapt the music to the resources of the company, and even now and then to write in a new aria for some ambitious singer, when it happened that the opera failed to supply such an opportunity for applause. For this difficult and taxing work he did not receive a salary until he was past 17, although the responsibility remained as long as he lived in Bonn, which he left at the age of past 21.

Despite the poverty and miserable circumstances of the family, the young Beethoven made friends. He augmented his meagre income by giving piano lessons, upon which instrument he was, as early as the age of 11, a fine player. His teacher and superior, Neefe, the musical director, speaks of him as playing the whole of Bach's Well Tempered Clavier and improvising upon the piano with remarkable brilliancy, beauty and power. Thus he not only found a kind of second mother in a wealthy lady, Frau von Breuning, whose son and daughter he taught, but made friends with several members of the Vienna aristocracy, during their university days at Bonn. Young Count Waldstein, the same to whom the Waldstein sonata was afterwards dedicated, finding that the boy was neglecting his piano practice for lack of a suitable instrument, hired a grand piano and had it sent to his attic room. He also made friends with Count Lichnowsky and others, who remained his admiring and affectionate patrons through life.

During this period of Beethoven at Bonn, we have only two other distinct side-lights, beyond the letter of Neefe, already mentioned. When he was about 17 he is said to have been granted a sum of money that he might visit Vienna, where he called upon Mozart, and was asked by that great

Ans. 45-3

master to improvise upon the piano. It is said that when he began to play and was thoroughly warmed up with his work, Mozart opened the door into the next room, where he had left some friends in order to receive the young man, and remarked: "Listen, gentlemen; we will hear from that young man later."

Also, in 1792, the great composer Haydn passed near Bonn, on his way to London, and the Bonn musicians went four miles up the river to Godesberg, in order to play before him and entertain him; Beethoven submitted one of his latest compositions. Haydn saw the independence of the young man and urged him to come to Vienna to take lessons of him. Accordingly, a year later Beethoven did go to Vienna, having lessons at first of Haydn, and, when he had left for his second visit to London, of a much more severe teacher of theory, Albrechtsberger, then very celebrated, who, like Haydn, soon despaired of reducing the independent young master to the strict rules of musical composition as then taught.

Beethoven arrived in Vienna in 1793, and lived there all the rest of his life, 35 years. When he reached Vienna he was much the best pianist there, at least much the most interesting to hear; because he played with great expression and power, and improvised so touchingly that the listeners laughed or cried as the music moved them. While he had been a diligent composer since his early years, he threw away everything written in Bonn and only published his Opus 1 (first work) in 1796, the same consisting of three trios for violin, 'cello and piano.

Almost immediately afterwards he published his Opus 2 (second work), three sonatas dedicated to Joseph Haydn. These works are extremely remarkable as first works. Each one of the three follows its own model and is entirely unlike the others. Already the Beethoven qualities shine out. Neither of the three could possibly have been written by either of the two great composers who then ruled the musical world, Haydn and Mozart. They are much bolder, more difficult technically than anything of the older composers, and they go far beyond them in the variety and vigor of their moods. In the first sonata the Finale is full of the Beethoven power and sweeping mood. In the second there is a slow movement of the new and Beethovenish type, a movement which he hardly surpassed; and the third is very long, and freely developed, quite like a concerto.

All his life long after this Beethoven remained at the head of Vienna musicians. He was universally admired as a great master. In aristocratic circles he was in great demand for his improvising, which was always original and striking. He earned his livelihood by selling compositions, by giving lessons (having as pupils some of the greatest ladies in Vienna) and by his annual concert, in which he brought forwards new works, which since have taken their place in the world-treasury of great music. For example, in his concert December 22, 1808, he produced, for the first time, two symphonies marked No. 5 and No. 6. The first was the so-called "Pastorale" and the second the great one now known as "No. 5, in C Minor."

The power and charm of Beethoven's music had much to do with the remarkable change in musical style. Haydn and Mozart had written much of their music in Sonata form, and had dropped the Fugue form, which had been for Bach the one form in which he wrote or improvised when meaning to show his powers at their best.

During this long life in Vienna, Beethoven wrote thirty-two sonatas for piano alone, ten for piano and violin, seven large trios for violin, 'cello and piano, many string quartettes and much chamber music of other combinations. Also nine great symphonies for full orchestra, five concertos for piano and orchestra, and one concerto for violin and orchestra—a total of nearly a hundred extended and serious compositions—all in Sonata form. Besides this he wrote many Variations, for piano alone and for various combinations of instruments; quite a number of very sincere and striking songs, one oratorio, one opera, and so on.

During the latter part of his life Beethoven became wholly deaf, unable to hear conversation, or even music. Nevertheless the compositions which he turned out during this part of his career are among the most beautiful, strong, and masterly of any that he wrote.

The peculiar eminence of Beethoven lies in his foreseeing so clearly the direction music was bound to take, and himself carrying out his ideas in this new direction. Before his time most composers held, as Haydn is said to have expressed it, that "the idea is nothing; style is everything." While Beethoven did not go so far as to turn this dictum around and make it read: "Style is nothing, ideas are everything," he did bring the emphasis upon what the music was meant to say, in preference to a mere elegance and cleverness in saying it. Music was becoming a voice of the heart, and not a mere style of pleasant sounds. Beethoven had the heart-things to say, and he said them with vigor and power. And this is why his name still stands as one of the greatest in the Art of Music.



**FORM AND STRUCTURE.**—The theme is in irregular three-part song form. First period 1—8; second period, short open period, 9—14; third period, 15—20.

The variations show the same form except the last one, which develops the figure used as variation motive at greater length, in the form of extended periods; the entire variation being in the nature of *coda* to the set of variations.

All the variations are somewhat free, and are founded partly upon the melody and partly upon the harmony of the original theme. The measure-signature of theme and variations is 6/8. Variation IV is in the key of the tonic minor, G minor.

A comparison of theme and variations will show how the variations are constructed. Notice especially the treatment of melody notes, and how the harmony is made to fit by changing only the position of chords, as in Variation I, not the chords themselves. Note how new melodies built upon the harmonies and rhythms of the theme are composed against a figured accompaniment, as in Variation II. Note how Variation III is constructed entirely of figuration, and how the original harmonies and melodies are employed. Notice the change from major to minor in Variation IV. Examine the melody part in the bass of Variation V. Finally note the extension of Variation VI.

**THE POETIC IDEA.**—The theme is from a duet in the opera "La Molinara" by Paisiello. The melody must receive a very vocal or *cantabile* treatment and be made as expressive as possible. The harmony of the theme is very simple, and this simplicity affords the composer opportunity for later development by means of enriched harmonization and figuration.

**HOW TO STUDY.**—The theme of the variations is in 6/8 measure. The aesthetic effect of this kind of measure, therefore, must be preserved throughout the entire cycle of variations. Variation No. I should be practiced with all the rhythmic devices applicable to running passages in single notes. At the same time very careful attention should be given to bring out the individual melody notes, at least when they are found upon important measure divisions. For instance, the two B's in measure 1 and the two A's in the same measure, which are, respectively, the first and last notes of the group of sextolets in that measure; also the G in the first group (first and fifth notes), and the D which is the third note of the second sextolet. Follow the Variation through in this way, and it will be quite possible to preserve the melodic outline and still give it the effect of running work surrounding a definite melody brought into relief. The marks of expression or shading should be carefully attended to. Variation No. II is, to a certain extent, a counterpart of Variation No. I, the running work being here assigned to the left hand, while the right hand plays a melody more or less altered from the original. Variation No. III requires quite a sharp accent on the single notes standing on the accented parts of the measure. The entire Variation should be played with brilliancy and *bravura* or dash. Variation No. IV is in the tonic minor mode. It should be played very *legato*, with a very singing and expressive melody, observing carefully the tied notes with the accents which are proper to them. The entire Variation should be played with great expression, particular attention being paid to the treatment of dissonances. Variation No. V has the melody largely in the chords assigned to the left hand, against which very delicate passages in quick running notes are to be played; consequently, the style of touch in each hand is quite different. Variation No. VI requires that the melody be carefully shaded, and the entire Variation should be played with great vigor and brilliancy. The piece should be practiced at first without the aid of the pedal, and only gradually should the pedal be added, care being taken not to blur either the melodic or harmonic outlines.

# Six Variations.

Edited and Annotated by Frederic Lillebridge.

L.v. Beethoven.

## Tema.

Musical score for the Tema section, measures 1 through 20.

## Var. I.

Musical score for Variation I, measures 21 through 32.

45, 6.

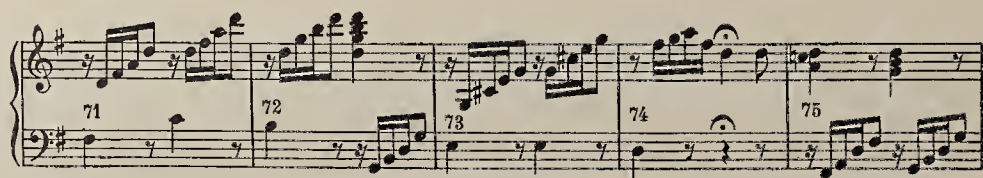
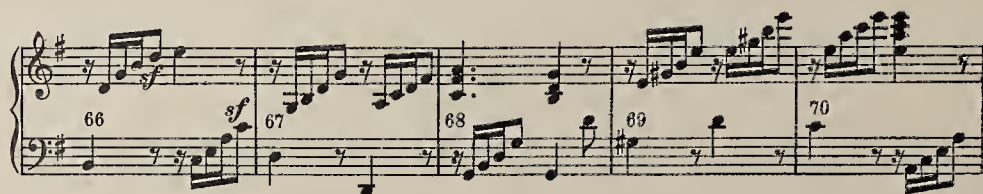
**Var. II.**

56 57 58 59 60

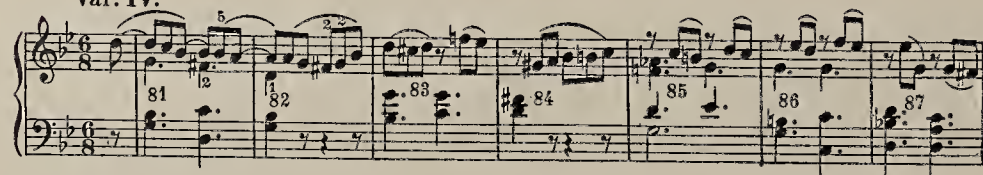
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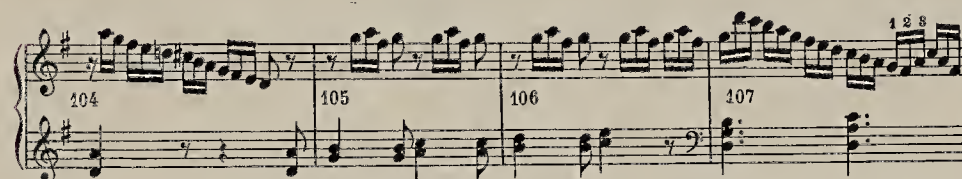
## Var. III.



## Var. IV.







## Var. VI.

Musical score for Variation VI, measures 121-144. The score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The music features a continuous eighth-note pattern in the bass and a more melodic line in the treble. Measure numbers 121 through 144 are indicated below the staves. Fingerings are marked with numbers 1-5 above notes. A repeat sign with first and second endings is present at measure 134. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) appears above measure 141.



145 146 147 148

149 150 151 152

153 154 155 156

157 158 159 160

161 162 163

164 165 166 167

45.0







